This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

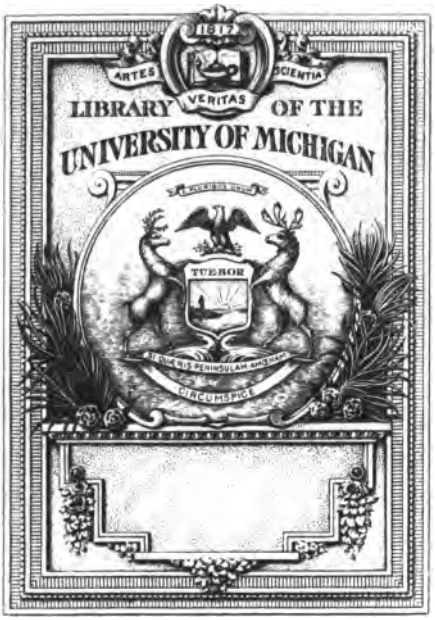
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`



THE GIFT OF

A. G. Hall Family

828
M66
1901

JOHN MILTON.

UNIV. OF MICH.

The Lakeside Series of English Readings

MILTON'S

MINOR POEMS*

WITH SKETCH OF

JOHN MILTON

CHICAGO
AINSWORTH & COMPANY
1901

*In accordance with College Entrance Requirements.

The text of the Edinburgh edition of 1792 is followed.

The publishers desire to express their obligations to Miss Ellen F. P. Peake, head of the English Literature Department, and to Miss Josephine Henderson, head of the Department of Rhetoric, of the Wisconsin State Normal School, Oshkosh, Wis., who have carefully reviewed and edited the Introduction and Notes.

Gift
A.G. Hall Family
7-29-37

INTRODUCTION.

JOHN MILTON, 1608–1674.

The first place among our English poets is due to Milton. —*Addison.*

Was there ever anything so delightful as the music of "Paradise Lost"? It is like that of a fine organ; has the fullest and the deepest tones of majesty, with all the softness and elegance of the Dorian flute; variety without end, and never equaled unless perhaps by Virgil.—*Cowper.*

JOHN MILTON, the greatest of English poets since Shakespeare, was born in 1608 and died in 1674. From childhood he seems to have been conscious of superior powers, and throughout his career circumstances combined to develop his peculiar genius. His first teacher, Thomas Young, must have done much toward giving him correct habits of study, for soon after entering St. Paul's school, at the age of twelve, he was able to write good Latin and Greek verses. At the age of sixteen years he was admitted to Christ's College, Cambridge, and after eight years left the college, familiar with not only music, mathematics, theology, and philosophy, but also with Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, Italian, and Spanish. Thus the future embodiment of Puritanism was as fine a

scholar as England ever produced. We can read of his life at Cambridge in his own words, as written in "Lycidas," lines 23–36. The five years succeeding his university career he spent at his father's country-seat in Horton, a village in Buckinghamshire. Here he disciplined his mind with mathematics and the sciences, and stored his memory with classical literature. Here also he indulged his passionate fondness for music — a fondness to which the melodious structure of his verse and the majestic harmony of his prose style bear constant testimony. Among the chief productions of this studious retirement were "L'Allegro," an ode to mirth; "Il Penseroso," an ode to melancholy; "Comus," a masque; and "Lycidas," a monody on the death of a friend.

For a period of fifteen months during the years 1638 and 1639 he traveled on the Continent, visiting the principal cities of France, Italy, and Switzerland. He seems to have made acquaintance with men who were most illustrious for genius and learning; he visited Galileo at Florence, Grotius at Paris, and the Marquis of Villa at Naples. After his return to England, he devoted the ten following years to teaching boys.

In 1643 he married Mary Powell, but the gloom of her new home became unbearable to her, and she returned to her father's house. The estrangement continued for two years, when his friends effected a

reconciliation. In 1654 his wife died, leaving three daughters, the eldest only eight years old. By his two subsequent marriages, Milton had no children. His last wife survived him for more than half a century.

At the request of Charles II, then an exile in France, Salmasius, an eminent scholar, published a powerful pamphlet in Latin, maintaining the divine right of kings. The Council commanded Milton to undertake a reply. Accordingly he prepared his "Defensio pro Populo Anglicano." He was adjudged the superior, and received public thanks for the victory won. It is said that the death of Salmasius was hastened by the humiliation of defeat. Loss of sight had menaced Milton for years, and after his work on the preparation of his argument, he became hopelessly blind.

> Dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
> Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse,
> Without all hope of day!
>
> — *Samson Agonistes.*

After the Restoration, new troubles came upon him; for through tracts and letters he had opposed to the last the return of monarchy. A proclamation was issued against him, his books were burned by the hangman, and he was forced to live in concealment until the general act of indemnity was passed, in 1660. From that time until his death he lived in retire-

ment, and resumed his poetical work, which he had practically abandoned in 1637, with the publication of "Lycidas."

His great epic, "Paradise Lost," was published in 1667. "Paradise Regained," which is little more than an ordinary paraphrase of the temptation of Christ as found in the gospel, and "Samson Agonistes," a dramatic poem on the capture and death of Samson, were published in 1670. On the 8th of November, 1674, Milton died. He was buried in the church of St. Giles, in the west-central part of London, a few squares south of where the British Museum now stands.

Although we know much about Milton, we do not know him. In manner he was austere, even to coldness. His imagination was defective in that warmth which could create a bond of sympathy between him and other men. Hence he could not, like Shakespeare, portray natural affections. His intellect predominated over his imagination. As a thinker, he probably stands next to Shakespeare and Bacon. He lacked both practicality and urbanity; he was aggressive, formed for strife, not happiness. Coleridge says of him: "My mind is not capable of forming a more august conception than arises from the contemplation of this great man in his later days. Poor, sick, blind, slandered, persecuted in an age in which he was as little understood by the party for whom as

by that against whom he had contended, and among men before whom he strode so far as to dwarf himself by the distance, yet still listening to the music of his own thoughts, or if additionally cheered, yet cheered only by the prophetic faith of two or three solitary individuals, he did nevertheless —

> " ' Argue not
> Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
> Of heart or hope; but still bore up and steered
> Right onward.' "

In his early poems, Milton is remarkable for beauty and perfection of rhythm. The blank verse of "Comus" is unexcelled. His best prose work is, perhaps, the "Areopagitica," a strong plea for the freedom of the press, although this work lacks the intensity of thought found in his controversial pamphlets. "Paradise Lost" has for a long time been considered his best poetical work.

As we read the great epic, we feel that the lightness of heart of the "Allegro," that even the classic philosophy of the "Comus," is gone. The beauty of the poem is like that of a stately temple, which, vast in conception, is involved in detail. The style is the most majestic in the whole range of English poetry. Milton's intellectual force supports and condenses his imaginative force, but his art is almost too conscious of itself. Sublimity is its essential difference. The interest of the story collects at first round the charac-

ter of Satan, but he grows meaner as the poem proceeds, and his second degradation after he has destroyed innocence is one of the finest and most consistent motives in the poem. The tenderness of Milton, the passionate fitness of his words to his work, his love of beauty, his religious depth, fill the scenes in which he paints Paradise, our parents, their fall; and at last all thought and emotion center in Adam and Eve, until the closing lines leave us with their lonely image on our minds. In every part of the poem, in every character in it, as indeed in all his poems, Milton's intense individuality appears. It is a pleasure to find it. The egotism of such a man, said Coleridge, is a revelation of spirit.

"To the greatness of the artist, Milton joined the majesty of a pure and lofty character. His poetic style was as stately as his character, and proceeded from it. Living at a time when criticism began to purify the verse of England, and being himself well acquainted with the great classical models, his work is seldom weakened by the false conceits and the intemperance of the Elizabethan writers, and yet is as imaginative as theirs, and as varied. He has not their naturalness, nor all their intensity, but he has a larger grace, a more finished art, and a sublime dignity they did not possess. All the kinds of poetry which he touched, he touched with the ease of great strength, and with so much weight that they became

new in his hands. He put a new life into the masque, the sonnet, the elegy, the descriptive lyric, the song, the choral drama; and he created the epic in England. He summed up in himself the learned influences of the English Renaissance, and handed them on to us. His taste was as severe, his verse as polished, his method and language as strict, as those of the school of Dryden and Pope that grew up when he was old. A literary past and present thus met in him, and, like all great men, he did not fail to make a cast into the future. He began the poetry of pure natural description. Lastly, he did not represent in any way the England that followed the tyranny, the coarseness, the sensuality, the falseness, or the irreligion of the Stuarts, but he did represent Puritan England, and the whole career of Puritanism from its cradle to its grave."

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF MILTON'S PRINCIPAL WORKS.

1629	"Ode on the Nativity."
1632–37	"L'Allegro."
	"Il Penseroso."
	"Arcades."
	"Comus."
	"Lycidas."
1632–58	Twenty-three Sonnets.
1641	"Reason of Church Government."
1641	"Of Reformation Touching Church Discipline."
1641	"Of Prelaticall Episcopacy."
1641	"Animadversions on the Remonstrants' Defence against Smectymnuus."
1642	"An Apology against a Pamphlet called 'A Modest Confutation, etc.'"
1644	"Of Education" (a tract).
1643–45	Four Pamphlets on divorce.
1644	"Areopagitica: A Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing, to the Parliament of England."
1649	"Eikonoklastes" (the Image-breaker).
1651	"Defensio pro Populo Anglicano."
1654	"Defensio Secunda."
1659	"Considerations Touching Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church."
1660	"A Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth."
1665	"Paradise Lost."
1667	"Samson Agonistes."
1670	"Paradise Regained."
1673	"Of True Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration."
1674	"Of Christian Doctrine."

ENGLISH AUTHORS WHO WERE CONTEMPORARY WITH MILTON.

John Bunyan,	1628–1688	Izaak Walton,	1593–1683
John Dryden,	1631–1700	Sir Thomas Browne,	1605–1682
Robert Herrick,	1591–1674	Jeremy Taylor,	1613–1667
Edmund Waller,	1605–1687	Samuel Pepys,	1632–1703
Sir John Suckling,	1609–1642	Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon,	1609–1674
Samuel Butler,	1612–1680	Thomas Hobbes,	1588–1679
Sir John Denham,	1615–1668	John Locke,	1632–1704
Richard Crashaw,	1616–1650	Sir Isaac Newton,	1642–1727
Abraham Cowley,	1618–1667		

"L' ALLEGRO" AND "IL PENSEROSO."

THESE are indeed exquisite lyrics, companion pieces. Some one has said that they are like two pieces of music, one in a major, the other in a minor key. Although the exact year of their composition is somewhat shrouded in mystery, all agree that they were written between 1632 and 1638. The English language probably contains no specimens of poetic art more finely finished and more nearly perfect.

The subjects are Italian, and there are no words in our language that will with exactness convey the idea mirrored forth in the titles. We may speak of the one as the cheerful, joyful man, and of the other as the thoughtful, reflective, pensive man; but the student will find that these words do not entirely answer to the thought of Milton.

The one, light hearted, exults in the brighter beauties of nature, the "peep of dawn," the "song of the lark," the huntsman's horn discoursing music, the laborers of the field, the landscape in its kaleidoscopic beauties, the cottage and the castle, and when the sun has set, an evening of the lighter pleasures. The other, no less happy, enters into the evening; he woos the nightingale, who deigns a song —

> "In her sweetest, saddest plight
> Smoothing the rugged brow of night;"

then proceeds in the moonlight, and listens to the curfew; and finally devotes the later hours to some deep tragedy or to the closer study of the unsolved problems of life. When "civil-suited morn appears," he betakes himself to some lone and pensive spot in the woods —

> "Where the rude ax with heavèd stroke
> Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
> Or fright them from their hallowed haunt;"

or enters the "studious cloister," with its "storied windows" "casting a dim religious light," and listens to the "pealing organ" and the "full-voiced quire" "in service high and anthems clear."

The two lyrics should be read together, compared, contrasted, until one realizes that the contentment of life consists not all of joy nor all of seriousness, but that each has its place in the divine economy.

After the reading, shall we venture an opinion that the poems forecast an alliance of Milton with the Puritans or with the Cavaliers?

For all mythological references students should consult some standard work on mythology, such as Bulfinch or Gayley.

I.

L'ALLEGRO.

HENCE, loathed Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born,
In Stygian cave forlorn,
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth cell,
Where brooding darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night-raven sings;
There under ebon shades, and low-brow'd rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.
But come thou Goddess fair and free,
In heav'n yclep'd Euphrosyne,
And by men, heart-easing Mirth,
Whom lovely Venus at a birth
With two sister Graces more
To ivy-crowned Bacchus bore;
Or whether (as some sager sing)
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a Maying,
There on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses washt in dew

1 From the Greek *μελαγχολία* — black bile.
2 Consult a mythology.
10 See "Odyssey," xi, 14.

Fill'd her with thee a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful Jollity,
Quips and Cranks, and wanton Wiles,
Nods, and Becks, and wreathed Smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it as ye go
On the light fantastic toe,
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty;
And if I give thee honor due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreproved pleasures free;
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And singing startle the dull night,
From his watch-towre in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good morrow,
Through the sweet-briar, or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine:
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin,
And to the stack, or the barn door,
Stoutly struts his dames before:

---

36 How closely allied are the mountains with the spirit of liberty; compare Wordsworth's sonnet, "England and Switzerland."

41 The lark is the early morning bird.

Oft list'ning how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbring morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill:
Some time walking not unseen,
By hedge-row elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate,
Where the great sun begins his state,
Rob'd in flames, and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight,
While the plowman near at hand
Whistles o'er the furrow'd land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
Whilst the landskip round it measures
Russet lawns, and fallows gray,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains on whose barren breast
The laboring clouds do often rest:
Meadows trim with daisies pied,
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide.
Towers, and battlements it sees
Bosom'd high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The cynosure of neighbouring eyes.

---

67 Numbers his sheep.

75 Pied — variegated.

80 Cynosure — Greek for dog's tail. Its relation to the constellation of the Lesser Bear — here center of attraction. See "Comus," line 342.

Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes,
From betwixt two aged oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met,
Are at their savory dinner set
Of herbs, and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;
And then in haste her bower she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or if the earlier season lead,
To the tann'd haycock in the mead.
Sometimes with secure delight
The up-land hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth, and many a maid,
Dancing in the chequer'd shade;
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,
Till the live-long day-light fail.
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat,
How Faery Mab the junkets eat,
She was pincht and pull'd, she said,
And he by Friars' lanthorn led,
Tells how the drudging goblin swet,
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,

---

83 Names which pastoral poets give to shepherds.
86, 88 Favorite names for rural maidens and keepers of the flocks.
87 Then a cottage, but now a lady's chamber.
91 An excellent passage for rapid reading. It is light, airy, and tripping.
103 Consult Shelley's Queen Mab, also Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet."
103 Junkets — sweetmeats.
105 Similar to elf or hobgoblin.

When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath thresh'd the corn
That ten day-labourers could not end;
Then lies him down the lubbar-fend,
And stretch'd out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength;
And crop-ful out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lull'd asleep.
Towered cities please us then,
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold
In weeds of peace high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit, or arms, while both contend
To win her grace, whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With mask, and antique pageantry,
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild.

117 From this point to the end, as night comes on, the joyful man finds his pleasure in books and music.

128 A show, allegorical in coloring; compare our modern floats.

132 Symbol for "comedy."

133 An excellent contrast between Shakespeare and Ben Jonson.

And ever against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce
In notes, with many a winding bout
Of linked sweetness long drawn out,
With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running;
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus' self may heave his head
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heapt Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto, to have quite set free
His half-regain'd Eurydice.
These delights, if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

---

146 Recall the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, and note how it is here told

II.

IL PENSEROSO.

HENCE vain deluding joys,
The brood of folly without father bred,
How little you bested,
Or fill the fixed mind with all your toys;
Dwell in some idle brain,
And fancies fond with gaûdy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sunbeams,
Or likest hovering dreams
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.
But hail thou goddess, sage and holy,
Hail divinest Melancholy,
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therfore to our weaker view,
O'erlaid with black, staid wisdom's hue.
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,
Or that starr'd Ethiope queen that strove
To set her beauty's praise above
The Sea-Nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended,

---

3 Bested — aid, avail. It is used now only participially.
4 Given to elevating thoughts.
5 In contradistinction to "fixed mind."
6 Fond — silly.
14 Too bright for the eye to dwell upon.

Thee bright-haired Vesta, long of yore,
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she (in Saturn's reign,
Such mixture was not held a stain)
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
While yet there was no fear of Jove.
Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of cypress lawn,
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come, but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gate,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There held in holy passion still,
Forget thy self to marble, till
With a sad leaden downward cast,
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And join with thee calm Peace, and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring,
Aye round about Jove's altar sing.

---

24 A fanciful conception of Milton.

25 The golden age of human innocence.

32 Note the adjectives. Where do we find the contrast in "L'Allegro"?

35 Fine crape — fine in the sense of costly, perfect.

36 Decent — becoming.

39 Commercing — communing.

42 Insensible to environments.

46 Spare Fast — high thoughts, plain living. See Wordsworth's sonnet, "London, 1802," "Plain living and high thinking are no more."

And add to these retired Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure;
But first, and chiefest, with thee bring,
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheeled throne,
The cherub Contemplation;
And the mute Silence hist along,
'Less Philomel will deign a song,
In her sweetest, saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of night,
While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke,
Gently o'er th' accustom'd oak;
Sweet bird that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee chauntress oft the woods among,
I woo to hear thy even-song;
And missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wand'ring moon,
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heav'n's wide pathless way;
And oft, as if her head she bow'd,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide-water'd shore,
Swinging low with sullen roar;

---

53 See Ezekiel x.
56 Philomel — the nightingale. See myth.
59 The moon stops to listen to the music.
67 Note Act II, Scene I, lines 163, 164, of "Midsummer Night's Dream."
74 Curfew — custom made into law by William the Conqueror.

Or if the air will not permit,
Some still removed place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom;
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the belman's drowsy charm,
To bless the doors from nightly harm:
Or let my lamp at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft out-watch the Bear,
With thrice-great Hermes, or unsphere
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds, or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind, that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook:
And of those dæmons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or under ground,
Whose power hath a true consent
With planet, or with element.
Sometime let gorgeous tragedy
In scepter'd pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine,
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskin'd stage.
But, O sad Virgin, that thy power
Might raise Musæus from his bower,

87 Studying all night.
88 A mythical philosopher.
89 To disclose the secrets of the hereafter; refers to the study of Plato's ideas of the immortality of the soul.
99, 100 Three great subjects of Greek tragedy.
102 Symbol for the tragic drama.

Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what Love did seek.
Or call up him that left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That own'd the virtuous ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass,
On which the Tartar king did ride;
And if aught else, great bards beside,
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of turneys and of trophies hung;
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till Civil-suited Morn appear,
Not trickt and frounct as she was wont,
With the Attick boy to hunt,
But cherchef't in a comely cloud,
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or usher'd with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the russling leaves,
With minute drops from off the eaves.

---

106 Story of Orpheus and Eurydice.
109 Chaucer.
113 Virtuous — magic power.
116 Trophies. Note its etymology.
122 Plain garb, not "frounced."
124 Cephalus, whom Aurora loved.
126 Cherchef't — covered. Trace origin of word.
128 His — its.
130 Minute drops — dropping slowly as the shower ceases, like minute guns.

And when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To arched walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown that Sylvan loves
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude ax with heaved stroke
Was never heard the Nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallow'd haunt.
There in close covert by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee with honied thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feather'd sleep;
And let some strange mysterious dream,
Wave at his wings in airy stream,
Of lively portraiture display'd,
Softly on my eyelids laid.
And as I wake, sweet music breath
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some spirit to mortals good,
Or th' unseen Genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloisters palé,
And love the high embowed roof,
With antic pillars massy proof,

141 Garish — showy; exciting attention; dazzling. Note the word in "Lead, Kindly Light."

142 A biological reference — honey or pollen, which?

147, 148 Obscure lines.

164 Genius — tutelar spirit.

And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full voic'd Quire below,
In service high, and anthems clear,
As may with sweetnes, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell,
Of every star that heav'n doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew;
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures Melancholy give,
And I with thee will choose to live.

---

159 Storied — historic references on the stained glass.
160 Environment, suitable for meditation.
170 Rightly spell — study with due care.
172 Milton was very fond of nature and of botanical study.
176 A compliment to Melancholy, as in "L'Allegro" to Mirth.

INFORMAL ANALYSIS SUGGESTING UNITS FOR DISCUSSION.

COMUS.

Lines 1– 92. The wild wood-Thyrsis.
93–330. Comus and the lady.
331–658. The brothers.
659–957. The palace — Comus and the lady.
958–end. Ludlow town.

LYCIDAS.

1– 14. Prologue.
15– 22. Invokes the Muses.
23– 49. Digression on college life.
50– 63. Reproaches the nymphs, and proceeds with lament.
64– 84. Digression on fame.
85–111. Proceeds with lament, and interviews Neptune's herald, River Cam, and St. Peter.
112–131. Digression treating of the corruption of the clergy.
132–185. Proceeds with lament.
186–193. Epilogue.

COMUS.

A MASQUE.

Presented at Ludlow Castle, in 1634, before John, Earl of Bridgewater, then President of Wales.

THE PERSONS.

The attendant SPIRIT, afterwards in the habit of THYRSIS.
COMUS with his crew.
The LADY.
First BROTHER.
Second BROTHER.
SABRINA, the Nymph.

The chief persons which presented, were

The Lord BRACKLY.
Mr. THOMAS EGERTON, his brother.
The Lady ALICE EGERTON.

THE FIRST SCENE DISCOVERS A WILD WOOD.

The attendant SPIRIT *descends or enters.*

BEFORE the starry threshold of Jove's Court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
Of bright aërial spirits live inspher'd
In regions mild of calm and serene air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot,
Which men call Earth, and with low-thoughted care
Confin'd, and pester'd in this pin-fold here,
Strive to keep up a frail, and feverish being,
Unmindful of the crown that virtue gives

3 Inspher'd — in their proper sphere, *not* unsphere, "Il Penseroso."
4 Serene — note the metrical accent.
7 Pester'd — impeded. Pin-fold — like our pound.

After this mortal change, to her true servants,
Amongst the enthron'd Gods on sainted seats.
Yet some there be that by due steps aspire
To lay their just hands on that golden key
That opes the palace of eternity;
To such my errand is, and but for such,
I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds,
With the rank vapours of this sin-worn mould.
But to my task. Neptune, besides the sway
Of every salt flood, and each ebbing stream,
Took in by lot 'twixt high, and nether Jove
Imperial rule of all the Sea-girt isles,
That like to rich and various gems inlay
The unadorned bosom of the Deep,
Which he to grace his tributary Gods
By course commits to several government,
And gives them leave to wear their sapphire crowns,
And wield their little tridents, but this Isle,
The greatest, and the best of all the main,
He quarters to his bluehair'd deities;
And all this tract that fronts the falling sun
A noble Peer of mickle trust and power
Has in his charge, with temper'd awe to guide
An old, and haughty nation proud in arms:
Where his fair offspring, nurs't in princely lore,
Are coming to attend their father's state,
And new-intrusted scepter, but their way
Lies through the perplex't paths of this drear wood,

---

11 Beautiful in rhythm, powerful in diction.
16 Ambrosial — heavenly. Weeds — used generically for garments.
20 By lot — the division between Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto.
24 Grace — in the sense of to compliment or to dignify.
29 Neptune and those whom he commands.

The nodding horror of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wand'ring passenger.
And here their tender age might suffer peril,
But that by quick command from Sov'reign Jove
I was dispatcht for their defence, and guard:
And listen why, for I will tell ye now
What never yet was heard in tale or song
From old, or modern bard in hall, or bower.
Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape,
Crush't the sweet poison of mis-used wine
After the Tuscan mariners transform'd
Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listed,
On Circe's Island fell: (who knows not Circe,
The daughter of the Sun? whose charmed cup
Whoever tasted, lost his upright shape,
And downward fell into a groveling swine),
This Nymph that gaz'd upon his clustring locks,
With ivy berries wreath'd, and his blithe youth,
Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son
Much like his father, but his mother more,
Whom therefore she brought up and Comus nam'd,
Who, ripe and frolic of his full grown age,
Roving the Celtic, and Iberian fields,
At last betakes him to this ominous wood,
And in thick shelter of black shades imbower'd
Excels his mother at her mighty art,
Offring to every weary traveller,
His orient liquor in a crystal glass,
To quench the drouth of Phœbus, which as they taste
(For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst)

48 The myth concerning Bacchus and the Tuscan pirates.
58 A fanciful genealogy, original with Milton.
66 Drouth — intense heat produces or increases thirst.

Soon as the potion works, their human count'nance,
Th' express resemblance of the gods, is chang'd
Into some brutish form of wolf, or bear,
Or ounce, or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,
All other parts remaining as they were;
And they, so perfect is their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before,
And all their friends, and native home forget,
To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty
Ther'fore, when any favour'd of high Jove
Chances to pass through this advent'rous glade,
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star
I shoot from Heav'n, to give him safe convoy
As now I do: but first I must put off
These my sky robes spun out of Iris' woof,
And take the weeds and likeness of a swain,
That to the service of this house belongs,
Who with his soft pipe, and smooth-dittied song,
Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
And hush the waving woods, nor of less faith,
And in this office of his mountain watch,
Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid
Of this occasion. But I hear the tread
Of hateful steps; I must be viewless now.

---

69 Made in the image of God.
88 Iris — the rainbow, colors of the rainbow.

COMUS *enters with a charming rod in one hand, his glass in the other, with him a rout of monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wild Beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistring; they come in making a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands.*

Comus. The Star that bids the Shepherd fold,
Now the top of Heav'n doth hold,
And the gilded car of day,
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantic stream,
And the slope sun his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky pole,
Pacing toward the other goal
Of his chamber in the east.
Meanwhile welcome Joy, and Feast,
Midnight Shout, and Revelry,
Tipsy Dance, and Jollity.
Braid your locks with rosy twine,
Dropping odours, dropping wine.
Rigor now is gone to bed,
And Advice with scrupulous head,
Strict Age, and sour Severity,
With their grave saws in slumber lie.
We that are of purer fire
Imitate the starry quire,
Who in their nightly watchful spheres.
Lead in swift round the months and years.
The sounds, and seas, with all their finny drove
Now to the moon in wavering morrice move,

---

93 Star — Hesperus, evening star; time to put the sheep into the fold.
97 The ancient belief of shape of the earth, with Atlantic flowing around it.
110 Saws — maxims.
116 Morrice — a Moorish dance, used in outdoor sports in the reign of Edward III.

And on the tawny sands and shelves
Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves;
By dimpled brook, and fountain brim,
The wood-nymphs deckt with daisies trim,
Their merry wakes and pastimes keep;
What hath night to do with sleep?
Night hath better sweets to prove,
Venus now wakes, and wak'ns Love.
Come let us our rites begin,
'Tis only day-light that makes sin,
Which these dun shades will ne'er report.
Hail Goddess of Nocturnal sport
Dark-veil'd Cotytto, t' whom the secret flame
Of mid-night torches burns; mysterious dame,
That ne'er art call'd, but when the dragon womb
Of Stygian darkness spets her thickest gloom,
And makes one blot of all the air,
Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,
Wher'in thou ridst with Hecat', and befriend
Us thy vow'd priests, till utmost end
Of all thy dues be done, and none left out,
Ere the babbling eastern scout,
The nice morn on th' Indian steep
From her cabin'd loop hole peep,
And to the tell-tale sun descry
Our conceal'd solemnity.
Come knit hands, and beat the ground,
In a light fantastic round.

---

121 Wakes — night amusements. It was originally a solemn vigil, but became a merry-making occasion.

125 Rights — similar to, but not wholly like *rites*.

129 Cotytto — a Thracian goddess of immorality, whose festivals, as evil courts darkness, were celebrated at night.

144 Fantastic — referring to the *toe* in dancing. See "L'Allegro," line 34.

THE MEASURE.

Break off, break off, I feel the different pace,
Of some chaste footing near about this ground.
Run to your shrouds, within these brakes and trees;
Our number may affright: Some Virgin sure
(For so I can distinguish by mine art)
Benighted in these woods. Now to my charms,
And to my wily trains; I shall ere long
Be well stock't with as fair a herd as graz'd
About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl
My dazzling spells into the spungy air,
Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion,
And give it false presentments, lest the place
And my quaint habits breed astonishment,
And put the damsel to suspicious flight,
Which must not be, for that 's against my course;
I under fair pretence of friendly ends,
And well-plac't words of glozing courtesy
Baited with reasons not unplausible
Wind me into the easy-hearted man,
And hug him into snares. When once her eye
Hath met the virtue of this magic dust,
I shall appear some harmless villager,
Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.
But here she comes, I fairly step aside
And hearken, if I may her business here.

---

147 Shrouds — not the modern meaning, but simply hiding-places
164 Dazzling spells of power into, etc.
166 Not presentiments.
161 Glozing — flattering.
167 Gear — ordinary duties.

The LADY *enters.*

Lady. This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,
My best guide now; me thought it was the sound
Of riot and ill-manag'd merriment,
Such as the jocund flute, or gamesome pipe
Stirs up among the loose unletter'd hinds,
When for their teeming flocks, and granges full
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,
And thank the gods amiss. I should be loath
To meet the rudeness, and swill'd insolence
Of such late wassailers; yet O where else
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet
In the blind mazes of this tangl'd wood?
My Brothers when they saw me wearied out
With this long way, resolving here to lodge
Under the spreading favour of these pines,
Stept, as they said, to the next thicket side
To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit
As the kind hospitable woods provide.
They left me then, when the gray-hooded Ev'n,
Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed,
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain.
But where they are, and why they came not back,
Is now the labour of my thoughts; 't is likeliest
They had engag'd their wandring steps too far;
And envious darkness, ere they could return,
Had stole them from me, else, O thievish Night,
Why shouldst thou, but for some felonious end,
In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars,

178 Jocund — producing merriment.
198 Ingag'd — allowed themselves to go too far.

That nature hung in heav'n, and fill'd their lamps
With everlasting oil, to give due light
To the misled and lonely traveller?
This is the place, as well as I may guess,
Whence ev'n now the tumult of loud mirth
Was rife, and perfect in my list'ning ear,
Yet nought but single darkness do I find.
What might this be? A thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory
Of calling shapes, and beck'ning shadows dire,
And airy tongues, that syllable men's names
On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses.
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound
The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
By a strongsiding champion, Conscience.—
O welcome pure-ey'd Faith, white-handed Hope,
Thou hovering Angel, girt with golden wings,
And thou, unblemish't form of Chastity.
I see ye visibly, and now believe
That he, the Supreme Good, t' whom all things ill
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
Would send a glistring guardian if need were,
To keep my life and honour unassail'd.
Was I deceiv'd, or did a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?
I did not err, there does a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
And casts a gleam over this tufted grove:
I cannot hallow to my Brothers, but

208 Rife — prevalent.
208–220 Famous lines.
212 Siding — attending to help.
215 Chastity — in place of charity.

Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest
I 'll venture, for my new enliv'nd spirits
Prompt me ; and they perhaps are not far off.

SONG.

Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen
Within thy airy shell
By slow Meander's margent green,
And in the violet imbroider'd vale
Where the love-lorn nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well;
Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
That likest thy Narcissus are?
O if thou have
Hid them in some flow'ry cave,
Tell me but where,
Sweet Queen of Parly, Daughter of the Sphear,
So mayst thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all heav'n's harmonies.

Enter COMUS.

Comus. Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment ?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
And with these raptures moves the vocal air
To testify his hidd'n residence ;
How sweetly did they float upon the wings

---

232 Meander — a river in Asia Minor, famous for its "windings."
234 Study the myth of Philomel, "Il Penseroso," line 56, and also myth of Aëdon.
237 Narcissus — beloved of Echo, who, as her love was not requited, pined until naught but a question-answering voice was left. Narcissus became a flower.
241 Parly — conversation, speech. Daughter of the Sphear — music of the spheres.
248 An Alexandrine line.
248 His — its, a modern pronoun in the neuter possessive.

Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall smoothing the Raven down
Of darkness till it smil'd : I have oft heard
My mother Circe with the Sirens three,
Amidst the flowry-kirtl'd Naiades,
Culling their potent herbs, and baleful drugs,
Who as they sung, would take the prison'd soul,
And lap it in Elysium ; Scylla wept,
And chid her barking waves into attention,
And fell Charybdis murmur'd soft applause :
Yet they in pleasing slumber lull'd the sense,
And in sweet madness rob'd it of itself;
But such a sacred, and home-felt delight,
Such sober certainty of waking bliss
I never heard till now. I 'll speak to her,
And she shall be my queen. Hail foreign wonder
Whom certain these rough shades did never breed
Unless the Goddess that in rural shrine
Dwell'st here with Pan, or Silvan, by blest song
Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.
Lady. Nay, gentle Shepherd, ill is lost that praise
That is addrest to unattending ears;
Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift
How to regain my sever'd company
Compell'd me to awake the courteous Echo
To give me answer from her mossy couch.
Comus. What chance, good Lady, hath bereft you thus ?

---

253 Sirens — those who lured persons to death through their ecstatic songs.

256-258 Study with care the myth of "Scylla and Charybdis," Virgil's "Æneid," Book III, lines 551-560.

268 Pan, Silvan — respectively god of flocks and god of forests.

Lady. Dim darkness, and this leafy labyrinth.

Comus. Could that divide you from near-ushering guides?

Lady. They left me weary on a grassy turf.

Comus. By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why?

Lady. To seek i' th' valley some cool friendly Spring.

Comus. And left your fair side all unguarded, Lady?

Lady. They were but twain, and purpos'd quick return.

Comus. Perhaps fore-stalling night prevented them.

Lady. How easy my misfortune is to hit!

Comus. Imports their loss, beside the present need?

Lady. No less then if I should my brothers lose.

Comus. Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?

Lady. As smooth as Hebe's their unrazor'd lips.

Comus. Two such I saw, what time the labour'd ox
In his loose traces from the furrow came,
And the swink't hedger at his supper sate;
I saw them under a green mantling vine
That crawls along the side of yon small hill,
Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots.
Their port was more than human, as they stood;
I took it for a faëry vision
Of some gay creatures of the element,
That in the colours of the rainbow live
And play i' th' plighted clouds. I was awe-struck,

---

287 Are they of great loss beyond the needs of the present emergency?
290 Hebe — goddess of youth, cupbearer.
296 Swink't hedger — a hedge-cutter; a weary day-laborer.
297 Port — bearing.
301 Plighted — plaited.

And as I past, I worshipt; if those you seek,
It were a journey like the path to heav'n
To help you find them.
Lady. Gentle Villager,
What readiest way would bring me to that place?
Comus. Due west it rises from this shrubby point.
Lady. To find that out, good Shepherd, I suppose
In such a scant allowance of star-light,
Would overtask the best land-pilot's art,
Without the sure guess of well-practis'd feet.
Comus. I know each lane, and every alley green,
Dingle, or bushy dell of this wild Wood,
And every bosky bourn from side to side
My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood,
And if your stray-attendants be yet lodg'd
Or shroud within these limits, I shall know
Ere morrow wake, or the low roosted lark
From her thach't pallet rouse; if otherwise
I can conduct you, Lady to a low
But loyal cottage, where you may be safe
Till further quest.
Lady. Shepherd, I take thy word,
And trust thy honest offer'd courtesy,
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds
With smoky rafters, then in tap'stry halls
And courts of princes, where it first was nam'd,
And yet is most pretended: in a place
Less warranted than this, or less secure

---

312 Dingle, dell — the latter a more gently-sloped valley.
313 Bosky bourn — a bushy-banked brook.
316 Shroud — concealed.
331 Quest — either her search for her brothers or their search for her
337 Less warranted — less safe.

I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.
Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial
To my proportion'd strength. Shepherd, lead on. —

Enter THE TWO BROTHERS.

Elder Brother. Unmuffle, ye faint stars, and thou fair moon,
That wont'st to love the traveller's benizon,
Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
And disinherit Chaos, that reigns here
In double night of darkness and of shades;
Or if your influence be quite damm'd up
With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,
Though a rush candle, from the wicker hole
Of some clay habitation, visit us
With thy long levell'd rule of streaming light;
And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,
Or Tyrian Cynosure.

Second Brother. Or if our eyes
Be barr'd that happiness, might we but hear
The folded flocks pen'd in their watled cotes,
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
Count the night watches to his feathery dames,
'T would be some solace yet, some little cheering
In this close dungeon of innumerous boughs.
But O that hapless virgin, our lost Sister!
Where may she wander now, whither betake her

---

839 Square my triall — "As thy days are, so shall thy strength be."

841 Arcady — a star of the "Greater Bear." Guide of the Greek mariners. The King of Arcadia had a daughter who was changed into that constellation.

843 Cynosure — the "Lesser Bear," containing the polar star. Guide of the Phœnician mariners. See "L'Allegro," line 80.

844 Watled cotes — shelters made of twigs.

From the chill dew, amongst rude burrs and thistles?
Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,
Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm
Leans her unpillow'd head fraught with sad fears.
What if in wild amazement, and affright,
Or while we speak within the direful grasp
Of savage hunger, or of savage heat?

Elder Brother. Peace brother, be not over-exquisite
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils;
For grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
What need a man forestall his date of grief,
And run to meet what he would most avoid?
Or if they be but false alarms of fear,
How bitter is such self-delusion?
I do not think my sister so to seek,
Or so unprincipled in virtue's book,
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
As that the single want of light and noise
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not)
Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
And put them into misbecoming plight.
Virtue could see to do what virtue would
By her own radiant light, though Sun and Moon
Were in the flat sea sunk. And Wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude,
Where with her best nurse Contemplation,
She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,
That in the various bustle of resort

---

356 What if —— in —supply the needed words.
360 To cast — forecast, to have a presentiment.
361 Unprincipled — untutored.
371–373 Lines of much strength and beauty.
375 Flat sea — level brine "Lycidas" line 98.

Were all toruffl'd, and sometimes impair'd
He that has light within his own clear breast,
May sit i' th' center, and enjoy bright day,
But he that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon.

Second Brother. 'T is most true
That musing meditation most affects
The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
Far from the cheerful haunt of men, and herds,
And sits as safe as in a senate-house,
For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,
His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,
Or do his gray hairs any violence?
But beauty like the fair Hesperian tree
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
Of dragon watch with unenchanted eye,
To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit
From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.
You may as well spread out the unsunn'd heaps
Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den,
And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope
Danger will wink on opportunity,
And let a single helpless maiden pass
Uninjur'd in this wild surrounding waste.
Of night, or loneliness, it recks me not;

---

380 Toruffled — out of shape.

381–384 Lines worthy to be remembered.

388 Center — center of the earth, where darkness reigns.

391 Beads — his rosary.

398 The tree bearing golden apples, guarded by the three daughters of Hesperus and the dragon.

401 Wink — forego, let slip.

408 Single — one who is alone.

I fear the dread events that dog them both,
Lest some ill greeting touch attempt the person
Of our unowned sister.
Elder Brother. I do not, brother,
Infer, as if I thought my sister's state
Secure without all doubt, or controversy;
Yet when an equal poise of hope and fear
Does arbitrate th' event, my nature is
That I incline to hope, rather than fear,
And gladly banish squint suspicion.
My sister is not so defenceless left,
As you imagine, she has a hidden strength
Which you remember not.
Second Brother. What hidden strength,
Unless the strength of Heav'n, if you mean that?
Elder Brother. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength
Which, if heav'n gave it, may be term'd her own;
'T is chastity, my brother, chastity:
She that has that, is clad in complete steel,
And like a quiver'd Nymph with arrows keen
May trace huge forests, and unharbour'd heaths,
Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds,
Where through the sacred rays of chastity,
No savage fierce, bandite, or mountaineer
Will dare to soil her virgin purity:
Yea there, where very desolation dwells,
By grots, and caverns shag'd with horrid shades,
She may pass on with unblench't majesty,

---

407 Unowned — unprotected.
421 Complete steel — Shakespearean.
428 One of the nymphs who attended Diana.

Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.
Some say no evil thing that walks by night,
In fog, or fire, by lake, or moorish fen,
Blue meager hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost,
That breaks his magic chains at curfew time,
No goblin, or swart faëry of the mine,
Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.
Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call
Antiquity from the old schools of Greece
To testify the arms of chastity?
Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow,
Fair silver-shafted queen for ever chaste,
Wherwith she tam'd the brinded lioness
And spotted mountain pard, but set at nought
The frivolous bolt of Cupid; gods and men
Fear'd her stern frown, and she was queen o' th' woods.
What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield,
That wise Minerva wore, unconquer'd virgin,
Wherwith she freez'd her foes to congeal'd stone?
But rigid looks of chaste austerity,
And noble grace that dash't brute violence
With sudden adoration and blank awe.
So dear to heav'n is saintly chastity,
That when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried angels lacky her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
And in clear dream, and solemn vision,

---

436 Swart — swarthy.

442 "Silver-shafted" — recall Homer's epithets in the Iliad — "fleet-footed," "silver-bowed," "wide-ruling," etc.

443 Brinded — brindled.

444 Mountain pard — wild-cat.

447 Snaky-headed, etc. See Myth of Gorgons, Medusa, Minerva's shield.

458 Blank — complete.

Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear,
Till oft converse with heav'nly habitants
Begin to cast a beam on th' outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal: but when lust
By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
But most by lewd and lavish act of sin,
Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
The soul grows clotted by contagion,
Imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite lose
The divine property of her first being.
Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp
Oft seen in charnel vaults, and sepulchres,
Lingering and sitting by a new made grave,
As loath to leave the body that it lov'd,
And link't itself by carnal sensualty
To a degenerate and degraded state.

Second Brother. How charming is divine philosophy!
Not harsh, and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns.

Elder Brother. List, list, I hear
Some far off hallow break the silent air.

Second Brother. Me thought so too; what should it be?

Elder Brother. For certain
Either some one like us night-founder'd here,
Or else some neighbour wood-man, or at worst,

---

466 Imbodies and imbrutes — becomes physical and brutal.
466–475 The reference is to a familiar passage in Plato's "Phaedo."

Some roving robber calling to his fellows.

Second Brother. Heav'n keep my Sister. Again, again, and near!

Best draw, and stand upon our guard.

Elder Brother. I 'll hallow.

If he be friendly, he comes well; if not,

Defence is a good cause, and Heav'n be for us.

Enter the attendant SPIRIT, *habited like a Shepherd.*

That hallow I should know, what are you? Speak;

Come not too near, you fall on iron stakes else.

Spirit. What voice is that, my young Lord? speak again.

Second Brother. O brother, 't is my father Shepherd, sure.

Elder Brother. Thyrsis? Whose artful strains have oft delay'd

The huddling brook to hear his madrigal,

And sweeten'd every muskrose of the dale.

How cam'st thou here, good swain? hath any ram

Slipt from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,

Or straggling wether the pen't flock forsook?

How could'st thou find this dark sequester'd nook?

Spirit. O my lov'd master's heir, and his next joy,

I came not here on such a trivial toy

As a stray'd ewe, or to pursue the stealth

Of pilfering wolf; not all the fleecy wealth

That doth enrich these downs, is worth a thought

To this my errand, and the care it brought.

But, O my virgin Lady, where is she?

---

487 Best draw — unsheath swords.

495 Huddling brook — power of music.

How chance she is not in your company?

Elder Brother. To tell thee sadly, Shepherd, without blame,
Or our neglect, we lost her as we came.

Spirit. Ay me unhappy then my fears are true.

Elder Brother. What fears, good Thyrsis? Prithee briefly shew.

Spirit. I 'll tell ye; 't is not vain, or fabulous,
(Though so esteem'd by shallow ignorance,)
What the sage poets, taught by th' heavenly Muse,
Storied of old in high immortal verse,
Of dire chimeras, and enchanted isles,
And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to hell,
For such there be, but unbelief is blind.
Within the navel of this hideous wood,
Immur'd in cypress shades a sorcerer dwells,
Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,
Deep skill'd in all his mother's witcheries;
And here to every thirsty wanderer
By sly enticement gives his baneful cup,
With many murmurs mixt, whose pleasing poison
The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
And the inglorious likeness of a beast
Fixes instead, unmoulding reason's mintage
Character'd in the face: this I have learnt
Tending my flocks hard by i' th' hilly crofts,
That brow this bottom glade, whence night by night
He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl,
Like stabl'd wolves, or tigers at their prey,

---

511 Ay — ah!
520 Navel — center.
526 Murmurs — enchantments.
529 Unmoulding — destroying.

Doing abhorred rites to Hecate
In their obscur'd haunts of inmost bowers.
Yet have they many baits, and guilefull spells,
To inveigle and invite th' unwary sense
Of them that pass unweeting by the way.
This evening late, by then the chewing flocks
Had ta'n their supper on the savoury herb
Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,
I sate me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting honey-suckle, and began,
Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
To meditate my rural minstrelsy,
Till fancy had her fill, but ere a close,
The wonted roar was up amidst the woods,
And fill'd the air with barbarous dissonance;
At which I ceas't, and listen'd them a while,
Till an unusual stop of sudden silence
Gave respite to the drowsy frighted steeds,
That draw the litter of close-curtain'd sleep;
At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound
Rose like a steam of rich distill'd perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence
Was took ere she was ware, and wish't she might
Deny her nature, and be never more,
Still to be so displac't. I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of death: but O ere long

---

535 Hecate — goddess of witchcraft.
540 By then — at the time.
547 Meditate — to indulge in.
554 Close-curtain'd. See "Macbeth," Act II, Scene 1, 51.
558 Was took — taken possession of, charmed.

Too well did I perceive it was the voice
Of my most honour'd Lady, your dear sister.
Amaz'd I stood, harrow'd with grief and fear,
And O poor hapless nightingale thought I,
How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!
Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste,
Through paths and turnings oft'n trod by day,
Till guided by mine ear I found the place
Where that damn'd wizard, hid in sly disguise,
(For so by certain signs I knew) had met
Already, ere my best speed could prevent,
The aidless innocent Lady his wish't prey;
Who gently ask't if he had seen such two,
Supposing him some neighbour villager.
Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guess't
Ye were the two she mean't; with that I sprung
Into swift flight, till I had found you here,
But further know I not.

Second Brother. O night and shades,
How are ye join'd with Hell in triple knot,
Against th' unarmed weakness of one virgin,
Alone, and helpless! Is this the confidence
You gave me, Brother?

Elder Brother. Yes, and keep it still,
Lean on it safely; not a period
Shall be unsaid for me: against the threats
Of malice or of sorcery, or that power
Which erring men call Chance, this I hold firm,
Virtue may be assail'd, but never hurt,
Surpriz'd by unjust force, but not enthrall'd;
Yea, even that which mischief meant most harm.

---

578 Prevent — to come before.

Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.
But evil on itself shall back recoil,
And mix no more with goodness, when at last
Gather'd like scum, and set'l'd to itself,
It shall be in eternal restless change
Self-fed, and self-consum'd: if this fail,
The pillar'd firmament is rott'nness,
And earth's base built on stubble. But come, let's on.
Against th' opposing will and arm of heav'n
May never this just sword be lifted up,
But for that damn'd magician, let him be girt
With all the grisly legions that troop
Under the sooty flag of Acheron,
Harpies and Hydras, or all the monstrous forms
'Twixt Africa and Inde, I 'll find him out,
And force him to return his purchase back,
Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,
Curs'd as his life.

Spirit. Alas! good vent'rous Youth,
I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise;
But here thy sword can do thee little stead;
Far other arms and other weapons must
Be those that quell the might of hellish charms,
He with his bare wand can unthread thy joints,
And crumble all thy sinews.

Elder Brother. Why prithee, Shepherd,
How durst thou then thyself approach so near,
As to make this relation?

Spirit. Care and utmost shifts

---

604 Acheron — a river of hell, here metonymy.

605 Harpies and Hydras — the winged befouling fowls, part woman, part vulture. See "Æneid," Book III, line 212. By Hydras are probably meant huge water serpents.

617 Care and utmost shifts — anxiety and extreme circumstances.

How to secure the Lady from surprisal,
Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,
Of small regard to see to, yet well skill'd
In every virtuous plant and healing herb,
That spreads her verdant leaf to th' morning ray;
He lov'd me well, and oft would beg me sing,
Which when I did, he on the tender grass
Would sit, and hearken e'en to ecstasy,
And in requital ope his leathern scrip,
And shew me simples of a thousand names,
Telling their strange and vigorous faculties;
Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,
But of divine effect, he cull'd me out;
The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,
But in another country as he said,
Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil:
Unknown, and like esteem'd, and the dull swain
Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon:
And yet more med'cinal is it then that moly
That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave;
He call'd it hæmony, and gave it me,
And bade me keep it as of sov'reign use
'Gainst all enchantments, mildew blast, or damp,
Or ghastly furies' apparition.
I purs't it up, but little reck'ning made,
Till now that this extremity compell'd,
But now I find it true; for by this means
I knew the foul enchanter though disguis'd,
Enter'd the very lime-twigs of his spells,

627 Simples — herbs.
635 Clouted shoon — heavy shoes.
636 Moly. See "Odyssey" X, 280.
646 Lime-twigs — bird snares.

And yet came off: if you have this about you,
(As I will give you when we go) you may
Boldly assault the necromancer's hall;
Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood,
And brandish't blade rush on him, break his glass,
And shed the luscious liquor on the ground,
But seize his wand, though he and his curst crew
Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high,
Or like the sons of Vulcan vomit smoke,
Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.

Elder Brother. Thyrsis, lead on apace, I 'll follow thee,
And some good angel bear a shield before us.

The Scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness; soft music, tables spread with all dainties. COMUS *appears with his rabble, and the* LADY *set in an enchanted chair, to whom he offers his glass, which she puts by, and goes about to rise.*

Comus. Nay Lady, sit; if I but wave this wand
Your nerves are all chain'd up in alabaster,
And you a statue; or as Daphne was
Root-bound, that fled Apollo.

Lady. Fool do not boast,
Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind
With all thy charms, although this corporal rind
Thou hast immanacled, while heav'n sees good.

Comus. Why are you vext Lady? why do you frown?
Here dwell no frowns, nor anger; from these gates
Sorrow flies far: See here be all the pleasures

661 Daphne — whom Apollo loved.

That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
Brisk as the April buds in primrose-season.
And first behold this cordial julep here,
That flames, and dances in his crystal bounds,
With spirits of balm, and fragrant syrups mixt,
Not that Nepenthes, which the wife of Thone
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena
Is of such power to stir up joy as this,
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.
Why should you be so cruel to your self,
And to those dainty limbs which nature lent
For gentle usage, and soft delicacy ?
But you invert the cov'nants of her trust,
And harshly deal like an ill borrower,
With that which you receiv'd on other terms;
Scorning the unexempt condition
By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
That have been tir'd all day without repast,
And timely rest have wanted; but, fair Virgin,
This will restore all soon.

Lady. 'T will not, false traitor,
'T will not restore the truth and honesty
That thou hast banish't from thy tongue with lies.
Was this the cottage, and the safe abode
Thou told'st me of ? What grim aspects are these.
These ugly-headed Monsters ? Mercy guard me!
Hence with thy brew'd enchantments, foul deceiver:
Hast thou betray'd my credulous innocence
With visor'd falsehood and base forgery ?

675 Nepenthes — it meant sorrow-dispelling in the Greek, — Poe's "Raven."
698 Visor'd — masked.

And would'st thou seek again to trap me here
With liquorish baits fit to insnare a brute?
Were it a draft for Juno when she banquets,
I would not taste thy treasonous offer; none
But such as are good men can give good things,
And that which is not good, is not delicious
To a well-govern'd and wise appetite.
Comus. O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
To those budge doctors of the Stoic Furr,
And fetch their precepts from the Cynic Tub,
Praising the lean and sallow Abstinence.
Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth,
With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks,
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,
But all to please, and sate the curious taste?
And set to work millions of spinning worms,
That in their green shops weave the smooth-hair'd silk
To deck her sons; and that no corner might
Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins
She hutch't th' all-worshipt ore, and precious gems,
To store her children with; if all the world
Should in a pet of temp'rance feed on Pulse,
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,
Th' all-giver would be unthank't, would be unprais'd,
Not half his riches known, and yet despis'd,
And we should serve him as a grudging master,
As a penurious niggard of his wealth;
And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons,
Who would be quite surcharg'd with her own weight,

---

708 Cynic Tub — tub of Diogenes.
719 Hutch't — stored away.
722 Frieze — from Friesland, where the coarse woolen cloth was made.

And strangl'd with her waste fertility;
Th' earth cumber'd, and the wing'd air dark't with plumes,
The herds would over-multitude their Lords,
The sea o'erfraught would swell, and th' unsought diamonds
Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep,
And so bestud with stars, that they below
Would grow inur'd to light, and come at last
To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.
List, Lady, be not coy, and be not cosen'd
With that same vaunted name Virginity.
Beauty is nature's coin, must not be hoarded,
But must be current, and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partak'n bliss,
Unsavoury in th' enjoyment of itself;
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
It withers on the stalk with languish't head.
Beauty is nature's brag, and must be shown
In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,
Where most may wonder at the workmanship;
It is for homely features to keep home,
They had their name thence; coarse complexions,
And cheeks of sorry grain, will serve to ply
The sampler, and to tease the housewife's wool.
What need a vermeil-tinctur'd lip for that,
Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn?
There was another meaning in these gifts,
Think what, and be advis'd, you are but young yet.

Lady. I had not thought to have unlockt my lips

---

746 Brag — pride.
758 A beautiful line.

In this unhallow'd air, but that this juggler
Would think to charm my judgement, as mine eyes,
Obtruding false rules pranckt in reason's garb.
I hate when vice can bolt her arguments,
And virtue has no tongue to check her pride.
Impostor, do not charge most innocent Nature,
As if she would her children should be riotous
With her abundance; she, good cateress,
Means her provision only to the good,
That live according to her sober laws,
And holy dictate of spare temperance:
If every just man that now pines with want
Had but a moderate and beseeming share
Of that which lewdly-pamper'd luxury
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
Nature's full blessings would be well dispens'd
In unsuperfluous even proportion,
And she no whit incumber'd with her store;
And then the giver would be better thank't,
His praise due paid, for swinish gluttony
Ne'er looks to heav'n amidst his gorgeous feast,
But with besotted base ingratitude
Crams, and blasphemes his feeder. Shall I go on?
Or have I said enough? To him that dares
Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
Against the sun-clad power of Chastity,
Fain would I something say, yet to what end?
Thou hast not ear, nor soul to apprehend
The sublime notion, and high mystery,
That must be utter'd to unfold the sage

760 Bolt — sift, make subtle.
788 Full of strength.

And serious doctrine of Virginity.
And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know
More happiness than this thy present lot.
Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetoric,
That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence,
Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinc'd;
Yet should I try, the uncontrolled worth
Of this pure cause would kindle my rap't spirits
To such a flame of sacred vehemence,
That dumb things would be mov'd to sympathize,
And the brute earth would lend her nerves, and shake,
Till all thy magic structures rear'd so high,
Were shatter'd into heaps o'er thy false head.
Comus. She fables not, I feel that I do fear
Her words set off by some superior power;
And though not mortal, yet a cold shudd'ring dew
Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove
Speaks thunder, and the chains of Erebus,
To some of Saturn's crew. I must dissemble,
And try her yet more strongly. Come, no more,
This is mere moral babble, and direct
Against the canon laws of our foundation;
I must not suffer this, yet 't is but the lees
And settlings of a melancholy blood;
But this will cure all straight; one sip of this
Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight,
Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste.—

---

791 Fence — how to use cunning arguments, subtle, sinister, soulless.
804 Erebus — Tartarus, the dark and gloomy sub-earth regions.
808 Probably some reference to the Established Church.

The BROTHERS *rush in with swords drawn, wrest his glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground; his rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven in. The attendant* SPIRIT *comes in.*

Spirit. What, have you let the false enchanter 'scape?
O ye mistook, ye should have snatcht his wand,
And bound him fast: without his rod revers't,
And backward mutters of dissevering power,
We cannot free the Lady that sits here
In stony fetters fixt, and motionless;
Yet stay, be not disturb'd: now I bethink me,
Some other means I have which may be us'd,
Which once of Melibœus old I learnt,
The soothest shepherd that e'er pip't on plains.
There is a gentle nymph not far from hence,
That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream,
Sabrina is her name, a Virgin pure;
Whilom she was the daughter of Locrine,
That had the sceptre from his father Brute.
She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
Of her enraged stepdam, Guendolen,
Commended her fair innocence to the flood,
That stay'd her flight with his cross-flowing course.
The water nymphs that in the bottom play'd,
Held up their pearled wrists, and took her in,
Bearing her straight to aged Nereus' hall,
Who piteous of her woes, rear'd her lank head,

816 Rod revers't, etc.— to undo its enchantment.
828 Melibœus — a pastoral name, refers here probably to Spenser.
830 Sabrina — the river Severn, hard by the place where they were assembled.
838 Brute — the reputed first king of Britain, whence the name.
836 Nereus' hall — father of the Nereids.

And gave her to his daughters to imbathe
In nectar'd lavers strew'd with asphodel,
And through the porch and inlet of each sense
Dropt in ambrosial oils, till she reviv'd,
And underwent a quick immortal change,
Made Goddess of the River: still she retains
Her maid'n gentleness, and oft at eve
Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,
Helping all urchin blasts, and ill luck signs
That the shrewd medling Elf delights to make,
Which she with precious viol'd liquors heals;
For which the shepherds at their festivals
Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,
And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream
Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils.
And, as the old swain said, she can unlock
The clasping charm, and thaw the numbing spell,
If she be right invok't in warbled song;
For maid'nhood she loves, and will be swift
To aid a virgin, such as was herself,
In hard besetting need; this will I try,
And add the pow'r of some adjuring verse.

SONG.

Sabrina fair,
Listen where thou art sitting
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
In twisted braids of lilies knitting

---

838 Lavers — baths containing nectar and growing asphodels.
845 Helping — guarding against.
846 Urchin — mischievous elfs and imps.

The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair;
Listen for dear honour's sake,
Goddess of the silver lake,
Listen and save.
Listen and appear to us
In name of great Oceanus,
By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace,
And Tethys' grave majestic pace,
By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,
And the Carpathian wizard's hook,
By scaly Triton's winding shell,
And old sooth-saying Glaucus' spell,
By Leucothea's lovely hands,
And her son that rules the strands,
By Thetis' tinsel slipper'd feet,
And the songs of Sirens sweet,
By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,
And fair Ligea's golden comb,
Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks
Sleeking her soft alluring locks,
By all the nymphs that nightly dance
Upon thy streams with wily glance,
Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head
From thy coral-pav'n bed,
And bridle in thy headlong wave,
Till thou our summons answered have.
Listen and save.

SABRINA *rises, attended by water-nymphs, and sings.*

By the rushy-fringed bank,
Where grows the willow and the osier dank,
My sliding Chariot stays,

887–889 Consult mythology.

Thick set with Agate, and the azurn sheen
Of Turkis blue, and emerald green,
That in the channel strays;
Whilst from off the waters fleet,
Thus I set my printless feet
O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
That bends not as I tread;
Gentle swain, at thy request
I am here.

Spirit. Goddess dear,
We implore thy powerful hand
To undo the charmed band
Of true virgin here distrest,
Through the force, and through the wile
Of unblest enchanter vile.

Sabrina. Shepherd, 't is my office best
To help insnared chastity;
Brightest Lady, look on me;
Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
Drops that from my fountain pure
I have kept of precious cure,
Thrice upon thy fingers' tip,
Thrice upon thy rubied lip;
Next this marble Venom'd seat,
Smear'd with gums of glutinous heat,
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold
Now the spell hath lost its hold;
And I must haste ere morning horu
To wait in Amphitrite's bower.

SABRINA *descends, and the* LADY *rises out of her seat.*

Spirit. Virgin, daughter of Locrine

Sprung of old Anchises' line,
May thy brimmed waves for this
Their full tribute never miss
From a thousand petty rills,
That tumble down the snowy hills:
Summer drouth, or singed air
Never scorch thy tresses fair,
Nor wet October's torrent flood
Thy molten crystal fill with mud;
May thy billows roll ashore
The beryl and the golden ore;
May thy lofty head be crown'd
With many a tower and terrace round,
And here and there thy banks upon
With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.
Come, Lady, while Heaven lends us grace,
Let us fly this cursed place,
Lest the Sorcerer us entice
With some other new device.
Not a waste, or needless sound,
Till we come to holier ground;
I shall be your faithful guide
Through this gloomy covert wide,
And not many furlongs thence
Is your Father's residence,
Where this night are met in state
Many a friend to gratulate
His wish't presence, and beside
All the swains that there abide,
With jigs, and rural dance resort;

---

933 Anchises' line — Brute was supposed to have descended from Anchises, through Æneas.

We shall catch them at their sport,
And our sudden coming there
Will double all their mirth and cheer;
Come, let us haste, the Stars grow high,
But night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.

The Scene changes, presenting Ludlow town and the President's castle; then come in country dancers, after them the attendant SPIRIT *with the two* BROTHERS *and the* LADY.

SONG.

Spirit. Back, Shepherds, back, enough your play,
Till next sun-shine holiday;
Here be without duck or nod
Other trippings to be trod
Of lighter toes, and such court guise
As Mercury did first devise,
With the mincing Dryades,
On the lawns and on the leas.

This second Song presents them to their FATHER *and* MOTHER.

Noble Lord, and Lady bright,
I have brought ye new delight,
Here behold so goodly grown
Three fair branches of your own;
Heav'n hath timely tri'd their youth,
Their faith, their patience, and their truth,
And sent them here through hard assays
With a crown of deathless praise,
To triumph in victorious dance
O'er sensual folly, and intemperance.

---

968 Mercury — personification of grace.

The dances ended, the SPIRIT *epiloguises.*

Spirit. To the ocean now I fly,
And those happy climes that lie
Where day never shuts his eye,
Up in the broad fields of the sky:
There I suck the liquid air
All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three
That sing about the golden tree:
Along the crisped shades and bowers
Revels the spruce and jocund Spring,
The Graces, and the rosy-bosom'd Hours,
Thither all their bounties bring;
There eternal Summer dwells,
And West-winds, with musky wing,
About the cedarn alleys fling
Nard and cassia's balmy smells.
Iris there with humid bow
Waters the odorous banks that blow
Flowers of more mingled hue
Than her purfl'd scarf can shew,
And drenches with Elysian dew,
(List mortals, if your ears be true)
Beds of hyacinth and roses,
Where young Adonis oft reposes,
Waxing well of his deep wound
In slumber soft, and on the ground
Sadly sits th' Assyrian queen;

---

980 Cedarn — lined with cedar.

981 Nard and cassia — aromatic plants.

999 Adonis — Venus loved him; he was slain by a wild boar, but was permitted to visit the earth six months each year.

1002 Assyrian queen — Venus.

But far above in spangled sheen
Celestial Cupid her fam'd son advanc't,
Holds his dear Psyche sweet intranc't,
After her wand'ring labours long,
Till free consent the gods among
Make her his eternal bride,
And from her fair unspotted side
Two blissful twins are to be born,
Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.
But now my task is smoothly done,
I can fly, or I can run
Quickly to the green earth's end,
Where the bow'd welkin slow doth bend,
And from thence can soar as soon
To the corners of the Moon.
Mortals, that would follow me,
Love Virtue, she alone is free;
She can teach you how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime:
Or, if virtue feeble were,
Heav'n itself would stoop to her.

1006 Psyche — the eternal bride of Cupid. Study the myth.
1015 Welkin — the arch of the sky.
1021 Spheary chime — music of the spheres, here metonymy

LYCIDAS.*

YET once more, O ye laurels, and once more
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sear,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forc'd fingers rude,
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear,
Compels me to disturb your season due:
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
Who would not sing for Lycidas? He knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his wat'ry bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.
Begin then, Sisters of the sacred well,
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring.
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain, and coy excuse;
So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words favour my destin'd urn,
And, as he passes, turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud.

---

* Name of a shepherd in the Eclogues of Virgil. This poem, or elegy, was written in memory of one of Milton's college friends, who was drowned in the English Channel.

1 Once more — three years had elapsed since Milton had written any poem.

4 Forc'd — compelled.

13 Welter — tossed to and fro.

15 Sisters — the Muses. Well — probably Aganippe, near Helicon in Bœotia.

20 Urn — refers to the urn which holds the ashes of the dead.

For we were nurst upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill.
Together both, ere the high lawns appear'd
Under the opening eyelids of the morn,
We drove a-field, and both together heard
What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn.
Batt'ning our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the Star that rose, at ev'ning, bright
Toward Heav'n's descent had slop'd his westring wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,
Temper'd to th' oaten flute,
Rough Satyrs danc'd, and Fauns with clov'n heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long,
And old Damætas lov'd to hear our song.
But O the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone, and never must return!
Thee Shepherd, thee the woods, and desert caves
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,
And all their echoes mourn.
The willows, and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen,
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,

---

23 Nurst — companions together.
29 Batt'ning — fattening.
30 Star — probably the evening star, which, however, appears, but does not rise.
34 Satyrs, Fauns — University men of his time.
36 Damætas — a pastoral name.
40 Gadding — straggling.
45 Canker — the cancer worm of the rose.
47 Wardrobe — metonymy.

When first the white-thorn blows;
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.
Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Clos'd o'er the head of your lov'd Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep,
Where your old Bards, the famous Druids, lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream:
Ay me, I fondly dream!
Had ye been there — for what could that have done?
What could the Muse herself, that Orpheus bore,
The Muse herself for her enchanting son,
Whom universal nature did lament,
When by the rout that made the hideous roar,
His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?
Alas! what boots it with uncessant care
To tend the homely slighted shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights, and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,

48 White-thorn — blossoms of the hawthorn.
54 Mona — off the coast of Wales.
55 Deva — the river Dee, where Chester stands. Wizard — because supposed by early inhabitants to possess prophetic power.
58 Muse — Calliope.
67 Use — are wont to do.
68, 69 Amaryllis, Neæra — mere pastoral names.
70 Clear — pure.
73 Guerdon — reward.

And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with th' abhorred shears,
And splits the thin-spun life. But not the praise,
Phœbus replied, and touch'd my trembling ears;
Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistering foil
Set off to th' world, nor in broad rumour lies;
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in Heav'n expect thy meed.
O fountain Arethuse, and thou honour'd flood,
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crown'd with vocal reeds,
That strain I heard was of a higher mood;
But now my oat proceeds,
And listens to the Herald of the Sea
That came in Neptune's plea;
He ask'd the waves, and ask'd the felon winds,
What hard mishap hath doom'd this gentle swain?
And question'd every gust of rugged wings
That blows from off each beaked promontory:
They knew not of his story,
And sage Hippotades their answer brings,
That not a blast was from his dungeon stray'd;
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panope with all her sisters play'd.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark,

---

75 Fury — refers to Atropos, the Fate who cut the thread of life.
76 What figure in "life" and "praise" as applied to "splits"?
86 Mincius — a river of Italy.
89 Herald — Triton.
90 Hippotades — Æolus, god of the winds.
98 Level brine. See "flat sea," "Comus," line 375.
99 Panope — all-seeing, daughter of Nereus.

Built in th' eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.
Next Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge
Like to that sanguine flow'r inscrib'd with woe.
Ah! Who hath reft (quoth he) my dearest pledge?
Last came, and last did go,
The Pilot of the Galilean lake;
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain,
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain)
He shook his miter'd locks, and stern bespake;
"How well could I have spar'd for thee, young swain,
Enow of such as for their bellies' sake
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold?
Of other care they little reck'ning make,
Than how to scramble at the shearer's feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest;
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learn'd ought else the least
That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;
And when they list, their lean and flashy songs

---

101 Eclipse — superstition made such a time fraught with misfortune.
103 Camus — the river Cam, personifying Cambridge.
104 Bonnet sedge — coarse grass along the river's edge.
106 Sanguine flow'r — the hyacinth. Study the myth and the flower.
109 The Pilot — St. Peter. See Tennyson's poem, "Crossing the Bar."
112 Mitred locks — crowned with episcopal authority.
114-131 In condemnation of the corrupt clergy. See "Sesame and Lilies," 20-22.
119 Blind mouths — all mouths to eat, but no eyes to see.

Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw,
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But swoll'n with wind and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said;
But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."
Return, Alpheus, the dread voice is past,
That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flow'rets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use,
Of shades and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamell'd eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honied showers,
And purple all the grouud with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freakt with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, and the well-attir'd woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears:

---

124 Scrannel — thin.

127 Rot — become debased and of unsound doctrine.

128 Grim wolf — Milton refers to the Church of Rome, which prospered greatly at this period.

130 Two-handed engine — it took two hands to wield it. Note "two-edged sword" of Scripture.

132 A sudden transition. Here follows one of the most beautiful passages in English poetry, 132–151.

138 Swart star — Sirius.

142 Rathe — early.

Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffodillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.
For so to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.
Ay me! Whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurl'd,
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,
Where the great vision of the guarded mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold;
Look homeward Angel now, and melt with ruth,
And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.
Weep no more, woful Shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas your sorrow is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the wat'ry floor;
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky.
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,

---

149 Amaranthus — unfading.
151 Hearse — the tomb of the poet.
156 Hebrides — along the west coast of Scotland.
160 Bellerus — Cornish giant,—from Bellarium, Land's End, Cornwall.
161 Vision — St. Michael guarding the mount near Land's End.
162 Namancos, Bayona — a Spanish tower and castle.
164 Dolphins — they rescued the poet Arion, who had thrown himself into the sea, to escape the pirates.
165 Another transition from the mortal body to the immortal soul.
168 Day-star — the sun.
170 Tricks — displays.

Thro' the dear might of Him that walk'd the waves,
Where other groves, and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
There entertain him all the saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;
Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.
Thus sang the uncouth swain to th' oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals gray,
He touch'd the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay;
And now the sun had stretch'd out all the hills,
And now was dropt into the western bay;
At last he rose, and twitch'd his mantle blue,
To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

178 See Matthew, Chap. xiv.
181 See Isaiah, Chap. xxv, 8; Rev. vii, 17, and xxi, 4.
188 Genius — guardian spirit of the English Channel.
186 Uncouth — Milton as unknown.
188 Quills — means a reed.
189 Doric lay — a pastoral poem.
190 Stretch'd out — the lengthened shadows of the hills.
192 Twitch'd — drew tightly about him.
193 Compare Fletcher's "To-morrow Ye Shall Feast in Pastures New."